

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, SW
SUBJECT: DEPTH OF SWEDISH COMMUNIST PARTY SPLIT UNCLEAR AS
ATTENTION FOCUSES ON CRUCIAL NORBOTTON DISTRICT

REF: STOCKHOLM 895

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. THE WITHDRAWAL OF ORTHODOX
SWEDISH COMMUNIST PARTY (VPK) MEMBERS UNDER THE
LEADERSHIP OF GOTEBORG DISTRICT CHAIRMAN ROLF HAGEL TO
FORM THE NEW COMMUNIST WORKERS' PARTY (APK) (REFTEL)
REMAINS FRONT-PAGE NEWS, BUT A MEANINGFUL ASSESSMENT OF
THE DEPTH OF THE SPLIT DEPENDS UPON THE OUTCOME OF
DISTRICT PARTY MEETINGS TO BE HELD WITHIN THE NEXT FEW
DAYS. PARTICULAR ATTENTION FOCUSES ON THE CRUCIAL
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NORBOTTEN DISTRICT, LONG THE CENTER OF OPPOSITION TO VPK
CHAIRMAN LARS WERNER. A MEETING ON MARCH 4 WILL DECIDE
WHETHER THE NORBOTTON DISSIDENTS WILL JOIN THE DEFLECTION
TO THE APK. END SUMMARY.

2. REPORTS WHICH INITIALLY STATED THAT THE NORBOTTON
DISTRICT HAD WITHDRAWN FROM THE VPK (REFTEL) WERE IN ERROR,

AND THE QUESTION OF WHETHER THE DISTRICT, WHICH IS UNIQUE IN THAT THE OPPOSITION GROUP IS IN THE MAJORITY, WILL SIDE WITH THE APK IS EXPECTED TO BE DECIDED MARCH 4. DISTRICT CHAIRMAN ALF LOWENBORG HAS REFUSED TO COMMENT ON THE LIKELY OUTCOME OF THE DISTRICT MEETINGS OTHER THAN TO SAY THAT, WHILE THERE IS STILL A CHANCE FOR CONCILIATION, 'IT IS VERY SMALL.' LOWENBORG, JUDGING FROM PAST STATEMENTS, IS PROBABLY NOT VERY EAGER FOR A FORMAL DIVISION AND APPEARS TO BE AWARE THAT IT INVOLVES THE DANGER OF POLITICAL SUICIDE FOR ALL CONCERNED. HE MAY FEEL THAT HE HAS NO ALTERNATIVE, HOWEVER, AND MOST OBSERVERS EXPECT THAT A LARGE NUMBER OF DISTRICT MEMBERS WILL THROW THEIR SUPPORT TO THE NEW PARTY.

3. THE OUTCOME IN NORBOTEN, FORMERLY THE FOREMOST VPK STRONGHOLD, IS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO THE VPK AND THE INCHOATE APK. IF NORBOTEN JOINS THE APK, THE NEW PARTY WILL BE ALMOST ASSURED OF CAPTURING AT LEAST 10-15 PERCENT OF THE COMMUNIST MEMBERSHIP; IF THE DISTRICT SHOULD UNEXPECTEDLY BALK, OR FRAGMENT ON THE QUESTION, IT WOULD BE A SIGNIFICANT VICTORY FOR WERNER.

4. OTHER DECLARATIONS OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE APK ARE TRICKLING IN AS VARIOUS LOCAL AND DISTRICT GROUPS CONSIDER THEIR STAND. MOST IMPORTANT THUS FAR IS THE DECISION OF VPK DISSIDENTS IN VASTERNORRLAND, WHERE THE STRUGGLE HAS BEEN INTENSE AND SOME MEMBERS EXCLUDED, TO SUPPORT THE NEW PARTY. THE LEADER OF THE GROUP, JEAN ASPLUND, WHO COULD DELIVER AS MANY AS 400 MEMBERS

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TO THE APK, SAYS HOWEVER THAT HE IS STILL OPEN TO DISCUSSION WITH THE VPK.

5. WITH MOST PARTY DISTRICTS MEETING BEFORE OR OVER THE WEEKEND, THE EXTENT OF THE ACTUAL DAMAGE TO THE VPK, BESIDES THE SYMBOLIC INJURY, SHOULD SOON BE MORE TANGIBLE. WITH HAGEL AND WERNER CASTIGATING EACH OTHER FOR CAUSING THE RUPTURE, AND EMOTIONS RUNNING HIGH, THERE SEEMS LITTLE LIKELIHOOD AT THE MOMENT THAT THE DIVISION CAN BE ABORTED. COOLER HEADS WILL ATTEMPT TO KEEP THE VPK TOGETHER FOR POLITICAL REASONS, WHICH IS WERNER'S GOAL, BUT AS LOWENBORG NOTED, "THIS IS LIKE A BUS THAT HAS BEGUN TO ROLL -- IT IS DIFFICULT TO STOP."

SMITH

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